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UNCLAS AMMAN 003717

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E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION ON IRAQ

Summary

-- Lead story in all papers today, May 11, focuses on the conclusion of the Arab Foreign Ministers meeting in Cairo in preparation for the Arab summit meeting in Tunis, reportedly scheduled for May 22. Another lead story highlights the comments of the Jordanian government spokesperson regarding a possible cabinet reshuffle before the end of May. Other stories continue to highlight developments in the Iraqi prisoners abuse story, focusing in particular on calls for Secretary Rumsfeld to resign.

Editorial Commentary

-- "America as it sees itself in Abu Ghraib"

Chief Editor Usama Al-Sharif writes on the back-page of center-left, influential Arabic daily Al-Dustour (05/11): "What is the really strange thing about the story of Abu Ghraib? Is it the reality that uncovering the scandal took this long time? Or is it the scale of the disgusting crime that was perpetrated by regular Americans who supposedly are the product of a society of justice, equality and freedom? Abu Ghraib has become a representation of America's estrangement from itself and probably constitutes a blow to a civilization that had thought, for a second, that it had achieved everything and had won everything. America's war in Iraq has turned into a psychological struggle for Americans that has revealed to the world and to America itself that there are limits to American superiority that even Apache helicopters cannot surpass. Technology, money and cultural heritage that millions of Americans take pride in cannot nullify the reality of what happened in the prison. America is not only fighting the Iraqis, but also it is struggling against itself and is yielding to all its contradictions. Today, it is living the utmost irony: liberation did not happen, freedom did not come about, values did not hold, and promises were not kept.. America has come face to face with itself in Abu Ghraib prison. Its war has become a joke of the Don Quixote style. America's moral bankruptcy in Iraq surpasses its military defeat and may even be the knockout that forces some form of humility and humbleness on this giant.. The image of the naked Iraqi man on top of the pile of other naked Iraqi men has come to symbolize America's civilization and mission to the world. America's merchandise is not fit for anyone but America. It is a commodity that cannot be exported, because it soon goes rotten when taken out of its geographic, political and ideological framework."

-- "The occupation that lost all its justifications"

Columnist Yaqoub Jaber writes on the op-ed page of center-left, influential Arabic daily Al-Dustour (05/11): "After exposing the conduct of its men and women soldiers in Abu Ghraib prison, the American occupation of Iraq lost all its moral and human foundations. It has become evident beyond the shadow of a doubt that the 'liberating' Americans have come to Iraq to plant the seeds of crime, to promote corruption and to set free all their eccentric instincts that are rampant in their sick society. When we view their leadership's blind support for the Israeli occupation's measures in Palestine, which are no less horrifying, we realize the depth to which America has sunk, and our faith of the demise of this unjust superpower is strengthened, for the downfall of empires throughout history had always been the result of their people's disintegration and their abandonment of the values of justice and peace.. Let America enjoy its sole possession of power in this world and its persecution of the people for the time being. The day of judgment is coming."

GNEHM